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SUBJECT: IRAQ SUNNI OUTREACH: AMBASSADOR KHALILZAD'S
MEETING WITH TALAL AL-GAAOD

REF: AMMAN 2796

Classified By: CDA DAVID HALE, REASONS: 1.4 (B &D)

1. (C) Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad outlined the most recent revisions to the draft Constitution, including probable changes addressing Arab concerns over federalism, Iraq's Arab identity, and qualifications for citizenship, during an October 3 meeting in Amman with Jordan-based Iraqi businessman and Anbar tribal figure Talal al-Gaaod. Note: al-Gaaod is a behind-the-scenes financial supporter of the Sunni Waqf, and maintains a widespread network of Anbar and other Iraqi Sunni political contacts (reftel). End Note.

Draft Constitution

2. (C) Al-Gaaod welcomed the proposed changes, and urged that they be adopted quickly with maximum fanfare. He also urged that copies of the revised constitution draft be distributed to the public in large quantities as soon as possible to help combat inaccurate rumors and generalizations about the nature of the text. Khalilzad agreed, and stressed that the time has come for some leading Sunnis to publicly express appreciation for the efforts to address Sunni concerns. Influential Sunnis also need to step forward and acknowledge that the draft constitution is an amendable, compromise document that provides an acceptable basis for the December general election.

Comments on Possible "Inter-ethnic" Leaders

3. (C) Khalilzad called the December election "make or break" for Iraq. It is essential that Sunnis - along with the Kurds and the secular Shia - turn out in large numbers to support a multi-ethnic coalition or electoral alliance that will counter Iranian influence and work to unite Iraq and make it a successful, prosperous state. While Iyad Allawi and his party are part of this picture, there is a need to identify and encourage additional moderate leaders and movements that have potential appeal and are ready to work constructively with others in the interests of Iraq. Al-Gaaod agreed, and made the following comments regarding potential figures who could be part of this effort :

Iyad Allawi - An important figure but a "one man show." Rather than exhausting his energy by trying to build a large pre-election coalition, he should focus on building loose electoral alliances based on shared principles with other (mainly regional) parties and individuals. Al-Gaaod emphasized that Allawi should focus on Baghdad and the South, and not try to take Sunni votes. He also needs to make better use of media.

General Nazar al-Khazarji - former Chief of Staff of the Iraqi army during the Iran/Iraq war. He was the putative leader of a coup d'etat against Saddam, allegedly called off at the last minute by the USG. He is now living in Abu Dhabi, but has recently indicated a willingness to return to Iraq and help in reconstruction of the army and/or engage in politics.

Hachem Hassani - Speaker of the National Assembly and a moderate who is winning increasing respect. He recently quit the Islamic Party to form his own, more liberal movement.

Adnan Dulaimi - former head of the Sunni Waqf, he is moderate and respected; the recent U.S. Army raid on his home in Baghdad angered many Sunnis. He has close ties to the U.A.E.

Tarek Hashemi - a constructive, moderate member of the Islamic Party; however he may be tied to Muslim Brotherhood.

Masha,an al-Jabouri - A National Assembly member with a significant regional power base and his own security force northeast of Baghdad. A very practical politician with close ties to Masud Barzani.

Mouwafak al-Rubaie - According to al-Gaaod, al-Rubaie is an Iranian stalking horse and an ethnic Iranian who has changed his name. Whatever his personal feelings or views, he cannot escape from Iran's grasp without high risk of being killed.

Future of Anbar Tribal Force

14. (C) Al-Gaaod praised the current Governors of Anbar (Ma,moun al-Alwani) and Mosul (Draeid Kashmolah), but was dismissive of Sa'ad al-Janabi. He also expressed disappointment at the "weak" role being played by Minister of Defense Sa,adoun Dulaime, which he attributed to a deal made by Dulaime with Ahmed Chalabi and Abdul Aziz al-Hakim. Al Gaaod also blamed Dulaime for the "slow" start in standing up the proposed Desert Protection Force of tribal irregulars in Anbar. Al-Gaaod complained that a unit of only 350 men (all from al-Qaim) has been authorized, and argued that at tribal irregular force of at least 4,000 needs to be set up as soon as possible in Anbar along the Euphrates river. Khalilzad noted that the 350-man force is an experiment that needs to prove itself, but took al-Gaaod,s point. Al-Gaaod predicted that the al-Qaim unit will quickly have a noticeable and positive impact on security in that part of Anbar.

Anbar - a "mini Saudi Arabia"?

15. (C) Al-Gaaod discussed his business plans for developing the Akaz gas field and other energy prospects in Anbar in tandem with Fluor, Anadarko, and other investors. He explained that establishment of a 500-megawatt gas-powered electricity generation plant is part of the project, and claimed that it could be set up within a year once adequate electricity payment guarantees are provided by the government, and construction started. Overall, he opined that Anbar may be a "mini-Saudi Arabia."

HALE